

# Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS)

- Approaches to CSS
- Accomplishments
- Partnerships

# Context Sensitive Solutions

According to the FHWA, CSS is "A collaborative, interdisciplinary approach that involves all stakeholders to develop a transportation facility that fits its physical setting and preserves scenic, aesthetic, historic, and environmental resources, while maintaining safety and mobility"



I-94 Public Hearings

# Context Sensitive Solutions

- MDOT emphasizes four important approaches to CSS:
  - State Transportation Commission Policy on Aesthetics
  - Involve stakeholders to develop and contribute creative solutions
  - Use flexible solutions and department guidelines to balance safety and capacity with environmental, cultural, and historical concerns
  - MDOT seeks public involvement from the beginning and throughout:
    - Corridor Planning
    - Project Scoping
    - Environmental Assessment
    - Design



# Context Sensitive Solutions

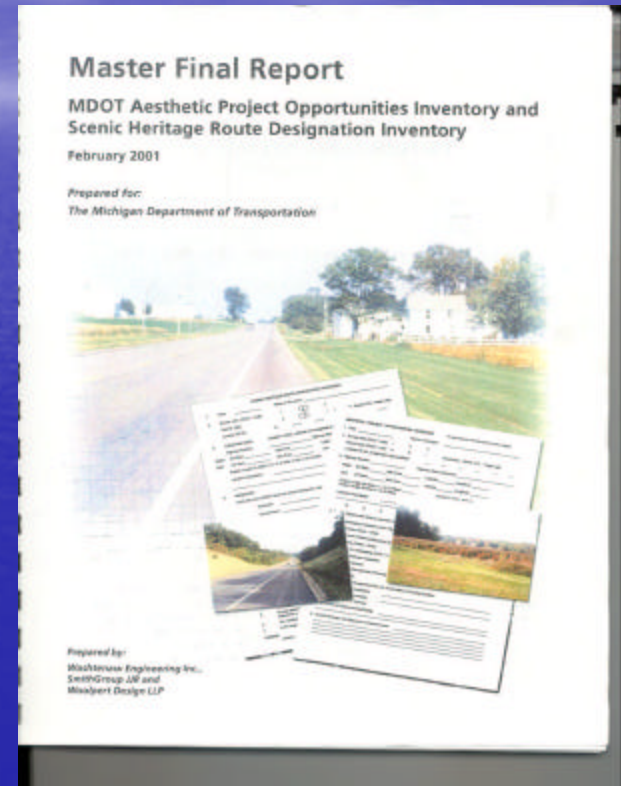
- Commission Policy on Aesthetics

“The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) shall protect, preserve and enhance its existing aesthetic resources wherever possible. This will include appropriate maintenance of trunkline roadsides, right-of-way, landscaping and aesthetic improvements, as well as protection of scenic areas and historic, cultural, architectural and environmental resources wherever possible”

(Adopted September 28, 2000)

# Context Sensitive Solutions

- Aesthetic Project Opportunities Inventory and Scenic Heritage Route Designation Report





# Context Sensitive Solutions

Develop designs that meet the needs of specific sites rather than using standardized solutions

Streetscape Downtown Saginaw



M-22 Glen Arbor Bridge, Leelanau County



# Context Sensitive Solutions

Beulah Bridge, Benzie County  
(Local Input regarding “look” of  
new bridge)





# Context Sensitive Solutions

- Aesthetic concerns can be addressed by use of natural material to blend with the landscape
- Using architectural features to create a unique appearance





# Context Sensitive Solutions

- CSS does not have to be expensive or complex



# Context Sensitive Solutions

- Striping of existing roadway to channel traffic





# Context Sensitive Solutions

Since 1992, MDOT  
has awarded \$200  
million in  
Transportation  
Enhancement  
Program grants



Landscaping along trunkline



Bikepath



Preservation of Depot

# Context Sensitive Solutions

- Over the past 11 years, MDOT has contributed \$6.5 million in match money through the Transportation Enhancement Program toward \$32.7 million in nonmotorized projects which benefit pedestrians, bicyclists and other forms of non-highway transportation

- Pedestrian Facilities along trunklines

- Non-motorized facilities as part of a trunkline





# Context Sensitive Solutions - Access Management

Access management (AM) is a set of proven design techniques that can help reduce traffic congestion, preserve traffic flow, improve traffic safety, prevent crashes, preserve existing road capacity and preserve existing investment in roads by managing the location, design and type of access to property.



- MDOT Access Management Program- 2000-2003: Over 800 local public officials, professional planners and citizens attend 30 Statewide Access Management Workshops

# Context Sensitive Solutions

## Access Management

- The new MDOT Access Management Guidebook is a key component of the MDOT planning and permit process. In 2004 the MDOT will prepare 11 corridor access management plans.
- Safety and capacity concerns can be addressed by Access Management
- Access management techniques create an aesthetically pleasing appearance to the roadway corridor





# Context Sensitive Solutions

M-72 in Grayling looking east before Access Management



Large and poorly defined driveways provide access to strip commercial uses

# Context Sensitive Solutions

M-72 looking east after Access Management and widening.

New curb & gutter define driveway locations making it less confusing and safer for customers.



Multiple businesses share common driveway and parking lot



# Context Sensitive Solutions

Every MDOT project receives environmental review and mitigation as required by law

- Erosion control incorporated into road design protects the environment
- Mitigation of all unavoidable adverse wetland impacts



# Context Sensitive Solutions

- Trunkline solutions protect historic resources

M-43 (West Main Hill) Kalamazoo

Before



After





# Context Sensitive Solutions

## Public Involvement - How we listen

- 26 Transportation Service Centers located statewide
- TSC responsible for project scoping
- Day to day contact with citizens, local officials and stakeholders



# Public Involvement

How we listen

MDOT's public involvement process is to obtain as much public participation and comment as possible





# Context Sensitive Solutions

## Public Involvement - How we listen

- Transportation Summit December 3,4 2003
- 2001-2003 Over 500 Announced Public Meetings
- Over 200 meetings held on I-496 Reconstruct in Lansing (1998-2002)
- US-131 "S" Curve, Grand Rapids - Over 25 meetings held, website established with public TV, radio announcements
- US-131 Corridor Study – St. Joseph County (1995-1998) More than 15 public meetings held throughout the study process.



# Context Sensitive Solutions

## Public Involvement - How we listen

- Public hearings provide opportunities for residents to be involved in local projects
- Involvement early in the process is vital for smooth, efficient project development.

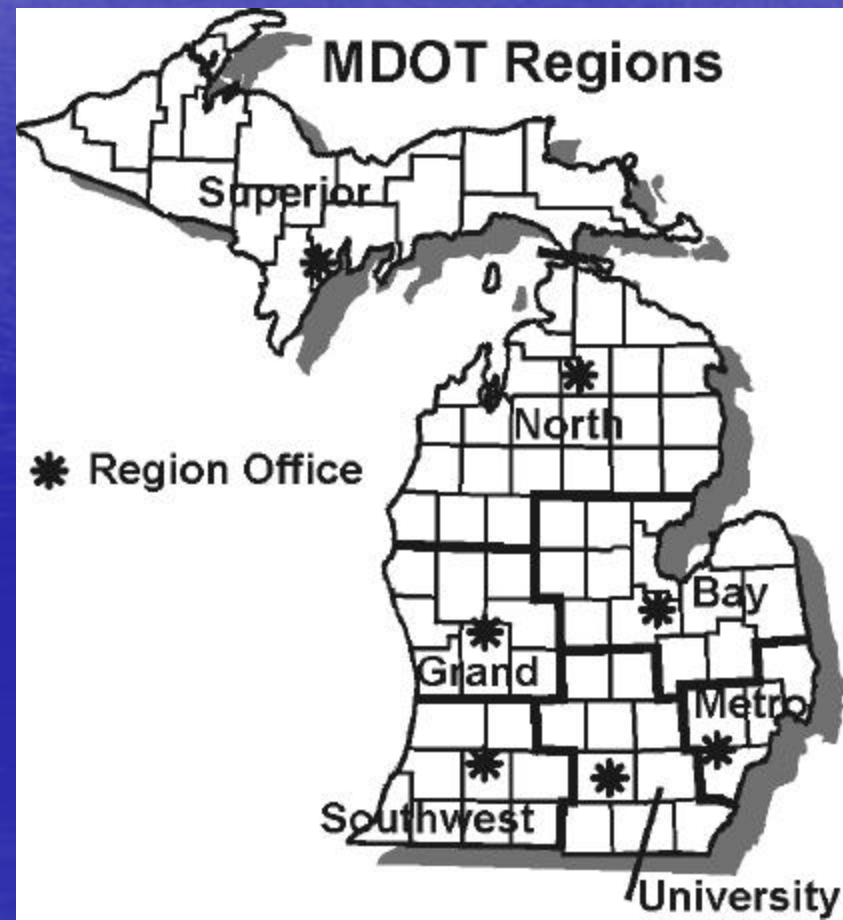




# Context Sensitive Solutions

## Public Involvement - How we listen

- Region combines TSC input with central office program direction
- Result is 5 Year Road and Bridge Program



# Context Sensitive Solutions

## Achieving Balance

- Could unknown costs of CSS compromise system condition goal ?
- Will CSS compromise safety ?



# Context Sensitive Solutions

## Continuous Improvement

- Interdisciplinary internal working group to examine balance issue
- Work with stakeholders to develop guidelines

# Context Sensitive Solutions



**We Need Partnerships!**